

**City of Willoughby Hills**  
**Mayor's Report-January 31, 2020**  
**Mayor Andy Gardner**

Happy New Year Willoughby Hills! It has been an exciting first month of 2020 here in the Mayor's Office. I would like to thank everyone that took time out of their New Year's Day Holiday to attend the Oath of Office Ceremony for Councilman Chris Hallum, Councilman Joe Jarmuszkiewicz, Councilman Mike Kline, Councilwoman Tanya Taylor Draper and myself. It was truly an honor to have so many friends share what was truly a special day for all of us!

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, I was honored to be a guest speaker at the Willoughby Hills Senior Apartments. I enjoyed my visit tremendously, especially with Mrs. Janosy (who was a noon-aid at Garfield School when I was in elementary school) and brought her sons' yearbook to share a few memories. Thank-you all for making me feel so welcome.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Rotary Club of Willoughby's meeting to honor Judge Larry Allen and the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program ("RSVP") who were honored as Citizen of the Year and Organization of the Year respectively. It was a special day for both Judge Allen and RSVP and it was wonderful to be one of the many communities to recognize their contributions to Northeast Ohio. Special thanks to resident Dale Fellows for coordinating an excellent program to honor these deserving recipients.

**Welcome New City Employees!**

At the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting, we were able to welcome Firefighter Brian Paladino as our newest career Firefighter/Paramedic. He brings significant medical experience to the WHFD team and I am sure will be a valued member of the WHFD for many years. At the same meeting, I swore in Police Patrolman Christian Powell. Officer Powell is a veteran of the Maple Heights Police Department and moved to the WHPD through our lateral hiring program. Welcome to both Firefighter/Paramedic Paladino and Officer Powell!

### **Employee Milestone Anniversaries**

I am pleased to announce that the following City employees celebrated milestone anniversaries during January:

- 5 years:      Police Officers Cory Planisek and R.J. Harmon
- 15 years:     Firefighter Tim Beck
- 20 years:     Service Department Team Member Marty Gazdak and  
Police Chief Chris Collins

If you see Cory, RJ, Tim, Marty or Chief Collins, please thank them for their service to our community.

### **Thank-You City Volunteers!**

I am very grateful to the many residents that have volunteered to serve on our City Boards and Commissions. I would like to welcome Tom Elliott who will serve as the Chairperson of our Planning Commission and Architectural Board of Review (“PC-ABR”) and Ron Lewis, Jr. who will serve as a member of the PC-ABR. Tom and Ron replace Chris Smith, the former chairman of the PC-ABR (who deserves thanks from our City for his service as a member of the PC-ABR) and Mike Kline who resigned following his election to City Council.

I would like to welcome Nico Viola, the newest member of our Board of Building and Zoning Appeals. Nico was kind enough to bring his years of experience in the real estate market to our BZA.

My thanks to Lisa Kubish who has agreed to join our Recreation Commission, taking the place of Councilman Joe Jarmuszkiewicz, who promptly returned as the Council’s representative to the Recreation Commission. We were also honored that Lynn Hallum agreed to serve another term on the Recreation Commission.

I am appointing residents Bob Bartolotta and Pat Grebenc to be our Representative and Alternate Representative respectively, to the Chagrin River Watershed Partners. Bob has extensive experience with natural resources in Northeast Ohio having worked and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History for over 40 years and Pat lives along the Chagrin River, so I believe that both will be a great resource both to our City and to the CRWP organization.

## **City Events and Recreational Opportunities**

Our Recreation Committee is hard at work planning events for this year. We will have our annual Pancake Breakfast at the Community Center on March 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 AM until 1:30 PM and the Willoughby Hills Lions Club's Pancake Breakfast will be the following Sunday, March 15. Please plan to attend! Tickets are now available at City Hall and through members of the Recreation Commission. Also, mark your calendars for the Spring Craft Show on March 28 and our annual Eggstravaganza on April 4.

We have already added two recreational events this year. First, PC-ABR Vice President John Lillich will lead two Spring Nature Walks at the Hach-Otis State Nature Preserve on May 9 and May 16. John has been the Manager of the facility for many years and I am absolutely thrilled he has volunteered to share his wealth of knowledge about the flora and fauna of the Chagrin River valley with our residents. Times for the walks will be announced early this Spring. Second, we will be bringing back the City of Willoughby Hills Photography contest. Start taking photos now, details for the contest will be announced this summer, with judging in the late fall. Winning photographs will be displayed in City Hall or the Community Center for 2020-2021!

## **2020 Road Resurfacing Program**

Following review of the condition of our roads and our 2017 Road Inventory, we are planning to resurface Graylock Drive, Beech Hills Drive, Evergreen Road and Rockefeller Road (South of Chardon Road) this year. Legislation will be presented to Council in February to begin the engineering with the goal to have the work completed by the end of September.

## **New Computers at City Hall**

Due to upgrades in technology and updated security requirements of State agencies, the City was required to update a number of our computers that had not been updated for many years. Twenty-Nine new computers were ordered and installed in January to provide upgraded capabilities to our Police, Service, Recreation, Building and Service Departments as well as the Mayor's office, Finance Department and the Mayor's Court (the Fire Department's computers had been more recently upgraded so they were not included in this round). Special thanks to City Council for moving quickly to approve the upgrade and to Police

Administrative Assistant Debbie Semik and Mayor's Executive Assistant Gloria Majeski for all of their hard work to secure the best new computers for the City's needs and during the month to facilitate the upgrade and the transition to the new computers.

### **New Police Vehicles**

The City tries to maintain a regular replacement program for our police vehicles. Typically, two to three new police vehicles are purchased by the City each year. This year, based upon Police Chief Collins' recommendation, we have purchased two new Chevy Tahoes. They are due to arrive in early February following which they will have decals installed and be outfitted with the necessary emergency equipment to allow them to be put in service. Thanks again to Council for supporting this purchase and to Chief Collins for his work researching and coordinating this acquisition.

### **SCBA Grant**

Thanks to the efforts of Firefighter Bob Vencl, Fire Chief Gandee and Mayor's Executive Assistant Gloria Majeski, the City has secured a FEMA grant to replace 22 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for the fire department. We are going out for bids to secure these new SCBA units shortly.

### **Sprucing Up City Hall**

Special thanks to the hard-working team in our Service Department who have been painting and refurbishing the walls in City Hall. Starting early in the month (when they haven't had to fight the snow and ice on our roads), they took on the challenge of painting the City Hall Lobby, our Council Chambers, the Police Department Lobby, Mayor's offices and City conference room. All of these areas are now brighter and more welcoming for you and visitors to our City.

### **Safety Announcement**

**FOR THOSE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THE NORTH CHAGRIN RESERVATION, WE HAVE RECEIVED NOTICE THAT THE CLEVELAND METROPARKS WILL BE CONDUCTING A DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THIS YEAR BETWEEN JANUARY 21 AND MARCH 19. CLOSURE SIGNS WILL BE POSTED. FOR YOUR SAFETY, PLEASE HEED THOSE SIGNS.**

### **Thank-You Councilman Fiebig**

It was with great disappointment that I received Councilman David Fiebig's resignation on January 26, 2020. For many years Councilman Fiebig gave generously of his time and talent to serve the residents of Willoughby Hills. Many of our residents came to rely on him as a Councilman and friend and I hope that he will find great satisfaction in the knowledge that he served them well for many years. Please join me in wishing Councilman Fiebig all the best in his future endeavors.

### **In Memorium**

Finally, as noted during the January Council meetings, I'm sad to report the passing of several residents of our City. My sympathies to the families of Mr. Michael Germano, Mr. Steve Palinkas and Mr. Slavko Kalic. Please keep these gentlemen and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

I look forward to the opportunities and challenges Willoughby Hills will have during the next four years. If I can be of service at any time, please feel free to call me (440-946-6614) or stop by City Hall.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2020!